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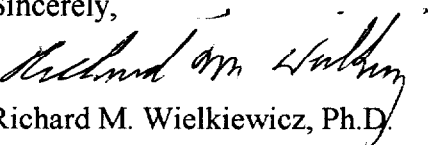
Jane Henney, M. D.,
Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Henney:

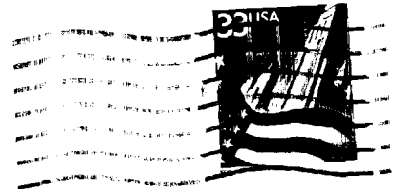
This letter is in reference to a recent article by Margaret Mellon in the Union of Concerned Scientists' magazine, Nucleus. This article, which appeared in the Winter 1999-2000 issue, addresses the use of antibiotics as growth promoters in livestock which is likely to lead to the evolution of antibiotic-resistant strains of diseases. Every time my child becomes sick, I wonder whether it is the result of an antibiotic-resistant organism. As a family, we are quite conservative regarding medication. We never "demand" an antibiotic from our doctor and we expect our doctor to prescribe an antibiotic only when there is sound evidence that it is needed. We expect an equal level of responsibility from the food industry.

Frankly, I find the uncontrolled use of antibiotics in the livestock industry to be frightening. How is it possible for the U.S. to allow the short term interests of one industry to overrule the long term health of an entire nation? How long will it be until an antibiotic-resistant strain evolves and causes a serious epidemic? The experience of the European Union in prohibiting animal uses of growth-promoting antibiotics used in human medicine indicates that this can be done cost effectively. Why is a similar action by the U.S. being delayed? The health of the nation is at risk if we fail to act.

Sincerely,


Richard M. Wielkiewicz, Ph.D.

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